

THESIS WRITING GUIDELINES

D) Thesis Format

Language

- Must be in English unless the Senate has approved otherwise

Word Limits

- A thesis, excluding tables, footnotes, endnotes, appendices and other illustrative matter, normally must not exceed:
 - Research-mode programmes:
 - (a) for Doctor of Philosophy: 80,000 words
 - (b) for Masters: 50,000 words
 - Mixed-mode programmes:
 - (a) for Masters: 30,000 words
 - Course work programmes:
 - (a) for Masters: 30,000 words

Font and typeset

- Times New Roman
- Font size 11-12
- Use one font type consistently throughout the thesis
- Font size may be decreased for footnotes, tables or endnotes

Spacing and margins

- Double or 1.5 spacing for text
- Single spacing may be used for tables, footnotes, endnotes, long descriptive text for figures
- Margins: Top: 2.0 cm; Bottom: 2.0 cm; Right: 2.0 cm; Left: 3.5 cm

Page numbering

- Placed 1 cm from bottom, in the centre
- Font must be the same as that used for Text
- Page number for Preliminaries are lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv...).
- The Title page is considered page i but the number is not shown.
- Page number for Text and References are Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4...)

Printing

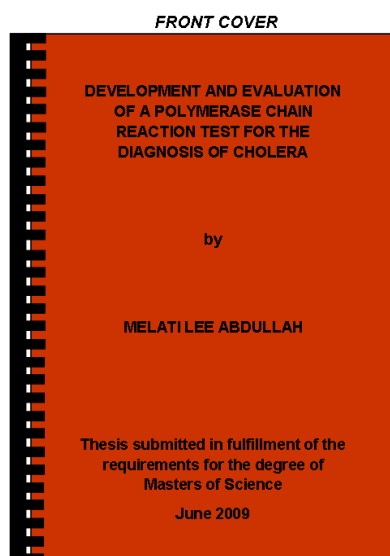
- White A4 paper (210 x 298 mm), 80gm
- One-sided printing only

Thesis cover and binding

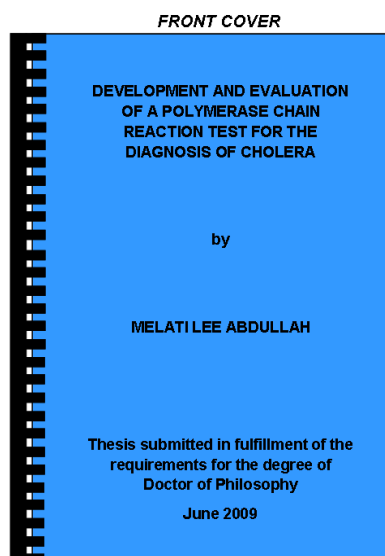
i) Soft-cover bound thesis (5 copies)

- The soft-cover bound thesis must be in the following colour:
 - (a) Master's thesis : red cover, with black spiral binding and plastic covering
 - (b) PhD thesis: light blue cover, with black spiral binding and plastic overing
- The cover of the thesis must contain the following information:
 - Full thesis title in capital letters
 - Full name of candidate in capital letters
 - Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of (name of the degree)
 - Month and Year of thesis submission
 - Font: Times New Roman, size 18-20, bold, center alignment
 - No page number

Soft-bound cover: Masters thesis



PhD thesis

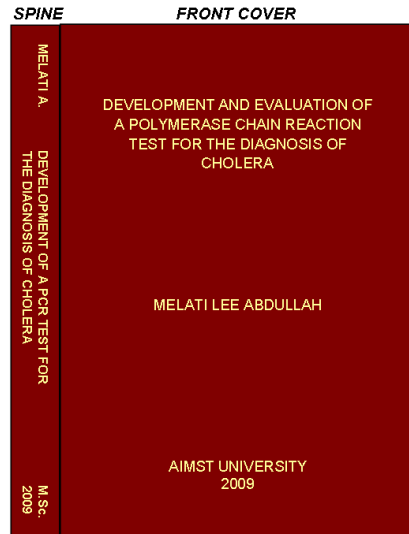


ii) Hard-cover bound thesis (3 copies)

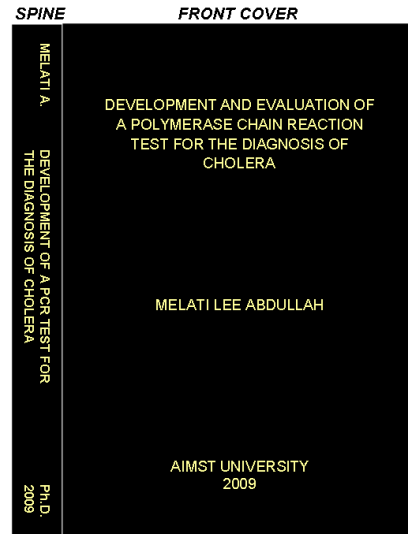
- The hard-cover bound thesis must be in the following colour:
 - (a) Masters thesis: maroon colour, rexin-bound cover with gold letters
 - (b) PhD thesis: black colour, rexin-bound cover with gold letters
- The cover of the final thesis must include the following information printed in gold block capital letters, font size 18-20, Arial:
 - Full thesis title in capital letters
 - Full name of candidate in capital letters
 - AIMST UNIVERSITY
 - Year of submission of hard-bound thesis copies
- The book spine must contain the following printed in gold block capital letters, use appropriate font size to fit, Arial:
 - Full name of candidate
 - Full thesis title (if the title is too long to fit, use an appropriate shorter title)

- Year of submission
- Degree (Masters or PhD)

Hard-bound cover: Masters thesis



PhD thesis



II) Thesis Contents

The thesis should comprise of 4 sections:

- 1) Preliminaries
- 2) Text
- 3) References
- 4) Appendices

1) Preliminaries

i) Title Page

- Title of thesis
- Full name of candidate
- Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of (name of the degree)
- Month and Year of final thesis submission
- Font: Times New Roman, size 18-20, Bold, Center alignment
 - No page number

ii) Declaration form

- A signed declaration on the originality of the work presented in the thesis
- Page number ii

iii) Bona fide certificate

- A signed certificate by the supervisor stating the research as a bona fide work
- Page number iii



- iv) Acknowledgement
 - Statement of appreciation to supervisor(s), parents, friends and acknowledgement of help, assistance or scholarship received
 - Page number iv
 - v) Table of Contents
 - Contains a list of the titles of chapters, parts, sections, subdivisions and their page number
 - Page number v
 - vi) List of Tables / Figures
 - Contains a list of the titles of tables / figures and their page number
 - Page number in Roman numeral accordingly
 - vii) List of Abbreviations / Symbols
 - Contains a list of abbreviations / symbols and their meaning
 - Page number in Roman numeral accordingly
 - viii) Abstract
 - A summary of the whole thesis containing a brief write-up of the subject background/ introduction, objectives, methodology, results and conclusion
 - Not more than 500 words in a single paragraph
 - Page number in Roman numeral accordingly
- 2) Text (divided according to Chapters)**
- i) Introduction (Chapter 1)
 - Contains the research background, problem statements and a thorough literature review.
 - The Literature review should be a separate section under Chapter 1
 - Followed by the justification and objectives of the study

- Include a flowchart / overview of the overall study plan
- Page number 1 (first page of Introduction), subsequent pages until Conclusion should be numbered in Arabic numerals accordingly

ii) Materials and Methods (Chapter 2)

- Contains a complete list of chemicals/ equipments and the source (company name and country)
- Detailed description of experimental methods used with appropriate citations
- Details may be summarized in a flowchart, table or figure form
- Additional information may be included in Appendices

iii) Results and Discussion (Chapter 3)

- Contains description of results or observations arranged according to the sequence in which the experiments were carried out
- Results may be presented in tables, figures, photos, plates form with descriptive text
- Additional data, extensive tables or detailed statistical analysis may be included in Appendices
- Discussion may be combined with Results in Chapter 3 or it may be separate as Chapter 4 (in this case, Conclusion will be Chapter 5)
- Discussion part should discuss the results, include explanation, evidence, justification or arguments (with appropriate citations) to support the result
- Discussion may include comparison of result of other similar work

iv) Conclusion (Chapter 4)

- A summary and overall conclusion of the study
- After concluding the study, this should be followed by Recommendation for Future Work

3) References

- Contains a list of reference materials cited in the text and arranged according to the referencing style used (recommended Harvard style, or see Section IV for referencing and citation format)
- The use of a bibliographic software is recommended to ensure accuracy and consistency
- Single spacing between lines within a reference, double spacing between references
- References should start on a new page
- Page number should continue from Conclusion and numbered in Arabic numerals accordingly

4) Appendices

- Contains additional data, extensive tables, detailed statistical analysis or long experimental methods that was not included in Text
- Appendices must be mentioned in the Text and numbered using Roman numerals, e.g. Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and so on
- Each Appendix should start on a new page
- The pages of Appendices, may be numbered as A-1, A-2, A-3 and so on
- Appendices must be listed in the Table of Contents (with page numbers)

III) Tables and Figures

- Must be properly centered within the margins
- Place table / figure near to the related text, preferably on a new page.
- Tables and figures must be mentioned in the text
- Table caption should be placed above the table.
- Figure caption should be placed below the figure.
- Table and figure headings should be numbered sequentially according to the chapter in which they appear, e.g. tables or figures in Chapter 1 should be Table 1.2 or Figure 1.2
- Table and figure caption / descriptive text should follow the table/ figure number after a semi-colon, e.g. Table 1.2: List of bacteria strains, or Figure 3.1: Gel electrophoresis result
- If the table or figure is too big to fit the margins, the font size or line spacing may be reduced or it may be placed in Appendices

IV) Referencing and citations

For referencing and citations, the Harvard style is the recommended referencing format. Other styles such as APA, MLA, Chicago may be used but a single format must be used consistently throughout the thesis.

Harvard style referencing is an author-date referencing system. Sources are cited within the body of your assignment by giving the name of the author(s) followed by the date of publication. All other details about the publication are given in the list of references or bibliography at the end. Below are several reference formats using the Harvard style adapted from <https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing> and <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/harvard-citation-guide>.

1. In-text citations

In-text references are references written within the main body of text and refer to a quote or paraphrase. In-text citations contain the author(s)'s or editor(s)'s surname and year of publication. Examples:

When citing a source with one author, state the surname as below:

In a recent study by Brown (2020).... Or ...(Brown, 2020).

When citing a source with two or three authors, state all surnames as below:

In a recent study by Smith, Perry and Thomson (2017)... Or ...(Smith, Perry and Thomson, 2017).

When citing a source with four or more authors, state first author's surname followed by 'et al':

In a recent study by Micheal et al (2019)... Or ... (Micheal et al, 2019)

When citing a source with no author, use the organisation responsible for the post in place of the author, or use the title in italics. Use the first few words if the title is too long:

(WHO, 2017) , Or (*The guide to virus taxonomy*, 2016)

When citing multiple works from the same author in the same year, the works are allocated a letter (a, b, c etc) after the year:

(Mitchell, 2017a) or Mitchell (2017b)

When citing multiple works in one parentheses, list the in-text citations in the normal way but with semicolons between different references:

(Mitchell, 2017; Smith, 2010; Andrews, 1989)

When citing a reference with no date, use 'n.d.' in place of the year:

(Crick, n.d.).

2. Reference list

A complete list of all the cited references used in your work with full bibliographic details.

Generally, Harvard Reference List citations follow this format: Last name, First Initial. (Year published). Title. City: Publisher, Page(s).

Citations are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

If there are multiple sources by the same author, then citations are listed in order by the date of publication.

Reference to an article in a journal

Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. Title of article. *Title of journal*, Volume number and (part number), Page numbers of contribution.

Mason, J., 2006. Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research*, 6 (1), 9-25. [For articles with multiple authors, include all author names in the reference. Where a source has a very long list of authors, list the first 6 author names, followed by "et al."]

Reference to an article in a journal from a database or website

When citing journal articles found on a database or through a website, include all of the components found in a citation of a print journal, but also include the medium ([online]), the website URL, and the date that the article was accessed.

Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. Title of article. *Title of journal* [online], Volume number and (part number), page numbers. Available from: URL of source/database. [Accessed Date].

Mason, J., 2006. Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research* [online], 6 (1), 9-25. Available from: <http://qrj.sagepub.com/>. [Accessed 15 August 2006].

Reference to a book: one author

Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. *Title*. Edition (if not the first). Place of publication: Publisher.

Woods, P., 1999. *Successful writing for qualitative researchers*. London: Routledge.

[In this example, you will need to look on the reverse of the title page to find the date.]

Reference to a book: two authors

Author's Surname, INITIALS. and Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. *Title*. Edition (if not the first). Place of publication: Publisher.

Brewerton, P. and Millward, L., 2001. *Organizational research methods: a guide for students and researchers*. London: Sage.

[In this example, you will need to look on the reverse of the title page to find the date.]

Reference to a book: three or more authors

1st Author's Surname, INITIALS., 2nd [and subsequent] Author's Surname, INITIALS. and *last* Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. *Title*. Edition (if not the first). Place of publication: Publisher.

McNiff, J., Lomax, P. and Whitehead, J., 1996. *You and your action research project*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Reference to a book: editor

Author's Surname, INITIALS., ed., Year of publication. *Title*. Edition (if not the first). Place of publication: Publisher.

May, T., ed., 2002. *Qualitative research in action*. London: Sage.

[Include all editors if more than 2, as in book examples.]

Reference to a contribution in a book

Contributing author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. Title of contribution. Followed by *In*: Surname, INITIALS., of author [or editor of publication followed by ed. or eds. if appropriate]. *Title of book*. Place of publication: Publisher, Page number(s) of contribution.

Morton, B. and Britton, J.C., 2000. The origins of the coastal and marine flora and fauna of the Azores. *In*: Gibson, R.N. and Barnes, M., eds. *Oceanography and marine biology : an annual review, volume 38*. London: Routledge, 13– 84

[Include *all* contributing authors if more than 2, as in book examples.]

Reference to a publication from a corporate body (e.g. a government department or other organisation).

Name of Issuing Body, Year of publication. *Title of publication*. Place of publication: Publisher, Report Number (where relevant).

Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2003. *First destinations of students leaving higher education institutions, 2001/02: reference volume*. Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Reference to a conference paper

Contributing author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. Title of contribution. Followed by *In*: Surname, INITIALS., of editor of proceedings (if applicable) followed by ed. *Title of conference proceedings* including date and place of conference. Place of publication: Publisher, Page numbers of contribution.

Granger, S., 1994. The hacker ethic. *In*: Kizza, J.M., ed. *Ethics in the Computer Age, 11-13 November 1994 Tennessee*. New York: ACM Press, 7-9.

[Include *all* contributing authors if more than 2, as in book examples.]

Reference to a newspaper article, in paper format

Author's Surname, INITIALS. (or Newspaper Title), Year of publication. Title of article. *Title of newspaper*, Day and month, Page number/s and column number.

The Times, 1985. Security review at major political conferences. *The Times*, 23rd January, 4d.

Reference to a newspaper article, from a database

Author's Surname, INITIALS. (or Newspaper Title), Year of publication. Title of article [online]. *Title of newspaper*, Day and month, Page number/s and column number. Available from: URL of source/database. [Accessed Date].

Hands, D., 2002. Leicester raise roof with win to savour [online]. *The Times*, 27th May, 26. Available from: <http://www.newsuk.co.uk> [Accessed: 11 December 2006]

Reference to web documents and e-books in PDF documents

Author's /Editor's Surname, INITIALS., Year. *Title*. Edition, if not the first. Place of publication, Publisher (if ascertainable). Available from: URL [Accessed Date].

Atkinson, T., 2002. *Social Europe and social science*. Swindon, Economic & Social Research Council. Available from: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCCentre/6-5500.pdf>[Accessed 15 May 2006].

[Include all authors/editors if more than 2, as in book examples.]

Reference to web pages/sites in HTML format

Author's /Editor's Surname, INITIALS., Year. *Title*. Place of publication, Publisher (if ascertainable). Available from: URL [Accessed Date].

National Centre For Social Research, 2006. *Qualitative Research*. London, National Centre for Social Research. Available from: http://www.natcen.ac.uk/natcen/pages/hw_qualitative.htm [Accessed 14 August 2006].

Reference to a thesis

Author's Surname, INITIALS., Year of publication. *Title of thesis*. Designation (type). Name of institution to which submitted.

Young, V. E., 1997. *Special collections in the year 2015: a Delphi study*. Thesis (PhD) University of Alabama.

Reference to a patent

Originator/s, (name of applicant/s) Year of publication. *Title of patent*. Series number and designation which may include full date.

Mavin, G. and Stevenson, T., (Portola Packaging Limited) 2007. *Container closure in combination with a ring pull insert*. UK patent application 2428669 A. 2007-02-07.

For other types of sources not listed here, please refer to:

<https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing> <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/harvard-citation-guide>.